

Boundary dispute: Group faults dissolution of Oyun, Offa LGs

Waheed Bakare

A group, Concerned Citizens of Offa, on Thursday faulted the dissolution of Oyun and Offa local government councils by the Kwara State Government.

The Governor, Dr. Bukola Saraki, had in a statement by his Chief Press Secretary, Mr. Bisi Abidoye, on Tuesday dissolved the councils following a crisis over boundary dispute between Offa and Erin-Ile communities, and subsequently appointed administrators to run the councils.

But the group in a statement by its Chairman, Alhaji Yinusa Folorunsho, and Secretary, Mr. Kola Olawoyin, in Lagos said the state government could not be extricated from the crisis in which no fewer than four persons were killed and property estimated at millions of naira destroyed.

It alleged that some state government officials facilitated the manifestation of the crisis and took no step to nip it in the bud despite ominous signs that the crisis was imminent.

Insisting that there was no justification for the dissolution of the councils, the group stated, "Though the two council chairmen may be negligent, it is not enough to dissolve all the local government democratic structures as the massive dimension and the nature of the crisis were beyond their control.

"Even the mob action on

some state government officials during the heat of the crisis could be regarded as a clear signal to the state government on the collective stand of the two communities that the state government was not properly and effectively handling the protracted boundary dispute.

"It therefore amounts to half measure and throwing away the baby with the

bath water if the two local government council chairmen could be removed while the state officials who are more culpable are left untouched."

Concerned Citizens of Offa urged the state government to use the seven-man judicial commission of enquiry it inaugurated to find a permanent solution to the recurring crisis.

While commiserating

with the families of those who lost their lives and property during the mayhem, it advised the government not to use the commission as a platform to embarrass, intimidate and persecute its perceived opponents.

The group equally challenged the entire Ibolo bloc to intervene in the crisis, saying there was no alternative to peace.